# Researching Islam - Suggested Methodology

# البحث عن الإسلام .. منهجية مقترحة

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## Looking for Proof? Start with Logic



Any publicity is good publicity. These words have been written and uttered so many times it is impossible to attribute the quote to any one person. Any publicity is good publicity; meaning that it is better that something receives bad publicity rather than no publicity at all. In the past decade we have been swamped with bad publicity about Islam, yet conversion statistics indicate that the number of people converting to Islam is growing at a phenomenal rate. Why is this so? Because wise people do not believe everything they read and see, they question, they apply critical thinking skills, they acquire knowledge and form their own conclusions.

Finding the correct information does not come easily. You need to search, to look for your proofs and evidences. Do you want to know about Islam? Which one of the thousands of books will you turn to first? Everything you ever wanted to know about is out there is cyber space waiting for the click of a mouse or the touch of a screen. Type Islam into Google search and what do you come up with? 479 million results in just .21 of a second. Pretty impressive, but where do you start? Now here is a novel answer, how about

at the beginning, back where it all began. Let us begin when God spoke to the angels.

**"'Verily, I am going to place mankind generations after generations on earth.' They said: 'Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and thanks and sanctify You.' God said: 'I know that which you do not know.'" (Quran 2:30)**

God knows what we do not know and contrary to what many would have us believe His words are not hidden and they are not obscure. Do you want to know about Islam, do you want to prove to yourself that Islam is the true religion bestowed upon mankind? There is an easy methodology that will help you sort through the hundreds of thousands of different bits of information available. It begins with the Quran.

The second verse of the second chapter of Quran begins with the words, "This is the book whereof there is no doubt, guidance to those who are righteous..." God knows that every human being is searching for that elusive connection and He says to humankind - this is the book, this is the guidance you have been searching for. Is this enough? Yes it could be. Throughout the centuries people have converted to Islam merely from hearing the recitation of Quran, still others have embraced Islam after hearing the soulful call to prayer. Some people convert to Islam after observing a way of life that combines, tolerance and respect with forgiveness and mercy and then there are those who need proof.

However, asking for proof is not to the seeker's detriment. Our religion, the way of life that is Islam, is not based on guess work, it is based on the words of God and the authentic teachings of His messenger Prophet Muhammad. Is-

lam is the religion of informed knowledge, not blind faith. When Pharaoh asked Prophet Moses who was the Lord of humankind and all that exists, he, Moses, answered, **"The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty". (Quran 26: 24 & 25)** Seek to be convinced. Hold a copy of Quran in your hands and read, contemplate and ponder. Seek your evidence and prepare to be amazed.

The Quran tells us about the power of God and how it operates in the universe. It explains that God's knowledge encompasses all things and that He is not only the Creator but also the Sustainer of the universe.

Evidence of the truth of Islam can be found in the scientific evidence that is found throughout the Quran. Some people like to call them miracles - scientific miracles in the Quran. There is complete consistency between many of the discoveries of modern science and the words of God written down more than 1400 years ago. Amazing scientific facts that could not have been known until recently tend to prove that the Quran is the word of God and thus that Islam is the true religion of all human beings. Logic tells us that 21st century knowledge in the 6th century could not be a coincidence.

Quran speaks eloquently about human embryonic development, and the fact that mountains have deep roots under the surface of the ground. It describes one of the undisputed facts of cosmology, that the universe was formed out of the remnants of smoke. Quran even describes the prefrontal area of the cerebrum as the place where lies and sins originate. Modern science tells us that this is the area responsible for

planning, and initiating and the area responsible for choosing either good or sinful behaviour.

Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, was unable to read or write yet scientific facts are also found in his authentic sayings and traditions. While teaching and counselling his followers, Prophet Muhammad mentioned scientific facts including the seven layers of the earth's crust. In depth articles backed up by evidence from scientists and doctors can be found on this web site and many others.

In part 2 we will continue to examine the Quran and learn more about its miraculous nature; we will look at more evidence for the existence of God and discuss how logical proofs can only lead to one conclusion.

## Logical Steps Lead to Logical Conclusions



In part 1 we discussed the miraculous nature of Quran and asked a question. How is it possible for a book written in the 6th century CE to contain knowledge only available in the 20th century CE? We came to the logical conclusion that the Quran is the word of God. However, is this enough, are scientific miracles proof that the Quran is the word of God? Yes, this may be enough for some, but others may want to look at further proofs. There are other aspects that can be taken into

consideration particularly pertaining to what is often referred to as the linguistic nature of Quran.

In the 7th century CE the Arabs, although predominantly illiterate, were masters of the spoken word. Their poetry and prose were considered a model of literary excellence. When Prophet Muhammad recited the Quran, the Arabs were moved by its sublime tone, eloquence, and extraordinary beauty. Amongst the Arabs, even those who rejected the call to Islam, there was no doubt that the words of Quran came from no earthly source.

The Quran challenges all to try and come forth with even a single chapter like it, whose shortest chapter, al-Kawthar, consists of only three verses.

**"And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call your witnesses besides God if you be truthful. If you do not do so – and you will never do so – then fear a fire whose fuel is men and stones prepared for the disbelievers." (Quran 2:23-24)**

The challenge stands till today and no one has been able to bring something even close to the Quran since the time of its revelation.

Thus, this fact demands us to ask yet another question. How do we know that these words of God were not changed over the centuries? The words we read and ponder over today, are the same words read over 1400 years ago. More than 1.5 billion Muslims believe this and they do so because God Himself promised to preserve and protect the Quran. God bestowed on humankind the gifts of hearing, seeing and thinking. Thus we use our minds, ears and eyes to examine the authenticity of Quran.

**“And God brought you out of your mother’s wombs devoid of all knowledge, but He has endowed you with hearing, vision, and intellect, so that you may be grateful.” (Quran 16:78)**

The words of the Quran have remained unchanged due to careful memorisation and meticulous recording. As the Quran was being revealed, it was memorized by the companions of Prophet Muhammad and then carefully transmitted generation after generation. According to one estimate there are over 10 million people today who have memorized the book cover to cover. If the book were to disappear it would be easily possible to reclaim each word, in the correct order with the correct pronunciation. Besides, trustworthy scribes also wrote down the revelation on flat stones, bark, bones, and even animal skins. During his lifetime Prophet Muhammad supervised this himself. Over the centuries Muslims and non Muslims alike have examined copies of Quran, some more than 1000 years old and found that they are all identical, apart from the introduction of vowel marks in the 7th century CE. These marks were introduced to further guard the authenticity of Quran by demanding strict adherence to pronunciation rules.

**“It is We Who have sent down the remembrance (i.e. the Quran) and surely, We will guard it from corruption.” (Quran 15:9)**

Having established that, the Quran contains knowledge that could only be known by God and confirming the authenticity of the words we have in front of us today, we have again reached the same logical conclusion – that the Quran and thus the religion of Islam is the religion of truth. When learning about Islam it is possible at every turning point to

research and recheck. However one might ask why the coming of Prophet Muhammad was not mentioned in previous revelations from God? The answer to this question is - he most certainly was mentioned.

The Quran both confirms and abrogates the books that were sent from God before it, including the Jewish Torah and the Gospels of Jesus. In our quest to confirm the truths of Islam we can look at these books and find clear predictions[1] of the coming of Prophet Muhammad. The first chapter of the Old Testament refers to the coming of a prophet and all but describes Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad could neither read nor write and the words of Quran that he spoke were words revealed to him by God.

**"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Geneses 18:18)**

**"Neither does he speak out of his own desire: that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired." (Quran 53:3-4)**

In John 14:16 Jesus speaks to his disciples saying "And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."[2] He even said "…if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."[3] Who exactly is the comforter? Jesus was clearly referring to the Messenger of God - Muhammad, who would

1 A full discussion of the Biblical prophecies referring to Prophet Muhammad can be found at the following web site – (http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/200/viewall/)

2 Bible - American Standard Version

3 John 16:7 Ibid.

come after him and glorify him[4]. In his traditions, Prophet Muhammad glorifies Jesus in terms impossible to misinterpret.

Whoever testifies that none deserves worship except God, who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, and that Jesus is the servant of God, His Messenger, and His Word which He bestowed in Mary, and a spirit created from Him, and that Paradise is true, and that Hell is true, God will admit him into Paradise, according to his deeds.[5]

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Hindu scriptures were revealed by God there is evidence that learned righteous Hindu scholars were searching for universal truths. The truths, that connect humankind with a higher power. The Hindu scriptures also mention Prophet Muhammad. In the Samveda Book II Hymn 6 verse 8 it says "Ahmed[6] acquired from his Lord the knowledge of eternal law. I received light from him just as from the sun." According to Bhavishya Purana in the Prati Sarag Parv III Khand 3 Adhay 3 Shloka 5 to 8. "A malecha (belonging to a foreign country and speaking a foreign language) spiritual teacher will appear with his companions. His name will be Mohammad."[7]

So far, we have established that the Quran contains knowledge unable to be proven until many centuries after it was revealed. We used this fact and others to acknowledge

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4 John:16:14 Ibid

5 Saheeh Bukhari

6 Ahmad is the same name as Muhammad, both meaning the praised one.

7 Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Hindu Scriptures by Dr. Zakir Naik.

that God Himself is the one who spoke the Quran.[8] The Quran is one of two principle sources of Islam; the other is the authentic teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad. In this article we have also established that Prophet Muhammad was predicted in sacred scripture, both from other monotheistic faiths (Judaism and Christianity) and Hinduism. Our next logical step and the subject of part 3 is to authenticate Prophet Muhammad's prophet hood, and thus provide evidence that the second principle source of Islam is the truth.

## God's message is not hidden



A very insightful person once said that if we want to establish the truth of the religion Muhammad bought to all humankind , we should first gather all the reliable sources, namely the Quran and then authentic traditions; after a thorough study and evaluation what is left, is Islam. In our series of articles we have so far learned that asking logical questions leads us to logical answers. By doing this we have discovered the miraculous nature of the Quran, including the advanced scientific

8 For a more detailed discussion on the miraculous nature of the Quran, please refer to the article "The Miraculous Quran" - (http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/528/viewall/)

knowledge contained therein and the sublime linguistic nature of Quran. We also discovered that the words of Quran have remained unchanged, from the moment they were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad almost 1500 years ago, until now. Thus logic tells us that Quran, one of the two primary sources of Islam was written by no earthly source. We will now look at the other primary source of Islam, the Sunnah, or the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

The first question that needs careful contemplation is whether or not Prophet Muhammad was a prophet of God. More than 1.5 billion Muslims, believe without doubt that he was, however those searching for evidence of the truth of Islam may need proof. The most obvious place to find proof is in the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad, known as the Sunnah. The sayings, actions, habits and silent approvals of one of history's most observed men.

Many people have claimed that Muhammad declared himself a Prophet for fame and glory. If we look into the authentic traditions, meticulously recorded for posterity, we find that Prophet Muhammad's call to Islam actually stripped him of the fame and glory he already possessed. Before the Quran was revealed to him, and before he became God's messenger Muhammad was a member of the most influential tribe in Mecca. In his own right he was known in Mecca and surrounds as the most trustworthy man among all the tribes. After announcing his Prophethood Muhammad and his followers became social outcasts.

In authentic traditions and biographies we learn that Prophet Muhammad and the new Muslim community were persecuted and even tortured. Sanctions were enforced and families disowned their own sons and daughters, leaving

many to be beaten and starved by the more aggressive members of Meccan society. Muhammad's followers came from all social ranks, from slaves to wealthy traders and entrepreneurs. Within a short space of time many people including Prophet Muhammad, had lost respect, status and wealth. Muhammad's claim to Prophethood was not for fame or glory. Prophet Muhammad said, "By God, if they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to leave this matter i would not leave it, until God makes it apparent or until I am killed calling people to it".[9]

Nor was it for status or wealth. The Meccan elders offered Prophet Muhammad money and prestige to renounce his call to Islam. They even offered to make him the leader of all the tribes and clans yet he consistently refused even when they said, "If you are doing all this with a view to getting wealth, we will join together to give you greater riches than any Quraishite has possessed. If ambition moves you, we will make you our chief. If you desire kingship we will readily offer you that".[10] Muhammad's claim to prophet hood was not for wealth or status. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad give us an insight into his life. We are able to see and understand the life of a man of God. Every moment of his life was a preparation for his coming prophet hood and this is obvious to all those who believe in God.

Researching the miracles of Prophet Muhammad in both the traditions and the Quran, is a logical step that often convinces those from a Christian or Jewish background of the truth of Islam. Prophet Muhammad is the last in a long line

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9 Ibn Hisham

10 Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum THE SEALED NECTAR by Saifur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri. Dar-us-Salam Publishers and Distributors Saudi Arabia.

of recognisable prophets. Noah, Abraham Moses, and Jesus are all Prophets of Islam and a Muslim is required to believe in all of them. God gave Prophet Muhammad to the world to complete His message not destroy it. For many Islam fills in the gaps and reawakens faith.

"I am the nearest of all the people to the son of Mary, and all the prophets are paternal brothers, and there has been no prophet between me and him (Jesus)." Prophet Muhammad.[11]

**"Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him (Muhammad) as they recognise their sons." (Quran 2:146)**

God supported His Prophets with miracles that are observable and they serve as a sign of a true Prophet. At the time of Jesus, the Israelites were very knowledgeable in the field of medicine. Consequently, the miracles Jesus performed (by the permission of God) were of this nature and included returning sight to the blind, healing lepers and raising the dead. Prophet Muhammad's major miracle was the Quran. As mentioned earlier, even those who did not believe in Muhammad's message knew the Quran to be literature beyond compare. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad contain many other miracles including water flowing from his fingers and trees deliberating shading him. Researching these events is certainly one way to confirm the truth of Islam.

Perhaps, finding clear evidence is not quite so easy for those from non monotheistic faiths or with no religious inclinations at all. However, following our suggested metho-

11 Saheeh Al-Bukhari

dology, asking logical questions, and expecting and searching for logical answers may reveal some unexpected truths. The Quran invites humankind to ponder and contemplate. God invites all of humankind, those with and without religious or spiritual convictions, to search for the truth. One should read, research, ponder and question, then reach a logical conclusion. God's message to humankind is not hidden. It is out there within everybody's grasp.

**"(This is) a Book (the Quran) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember." (Quran 38:29)**

## God's Wisdom is Sometimes beyond Our Understanding



In the previous three articles we discussed a suggested methodology for proving the validity and truth of Islam. When researching it is important to not only ask logical questions but also to expect a logical answer. In essence Islam is a message and guide from the Creator to the creation, therefore it should make sense. Thus we research and ask all the relevant questions. What is Islam and what do Muslims believe? Soon, sometimes very quickly, or after long hours, months or years of study we discover the an-

swer, but what happens now? When it becomes clear that Islam is the true religion, what should be your next move?

At this point, the point where the sheer overwhelming power of God becomes self evident it would make perfect sense to embrace the religion of Islam. Many people do just that. They begin their new life's journey secure in the knowledge that they are standing firmly on the right path. However, the research does not end there. Islam tells us that acquiring knowledge is a life long journey. New Muslims busy themselves in learning their new religion and marvel at the simplicity of a life lead by instructions from the Creator.

Others however feel driven to ask more questions, seek more answers and delve deeply into issues that are not immediately necessary. The age old saying, you must walk before you can run, is no less true when you apply it to learning about Islam. There is no relevant point to asking intricate questions when you have no yet understood the basics well. Believing in Islam as the truth implies accepting the whole message even if the meaning behind, or reason for many rulings is not completely understood. This may seem like a dilemma, especially if your research has led you to understand that Islam is the religion of informed knowledge not a religion based on blind faith. However trying to understand the wisdom in the secondary details before looking in to the proofs of Islam and its fundamentals, is not a good idea, because even if you find the wisdom in a few things but disagree with the main message, then there is no real benefit as it will not get you anywhere.

God does what He does for reasons that are at times beyond our comprehension and for reasons that may or may not be apparent. A Muslim learns to understand and accept

this statement, not automatically or with blind faith, but by establishing a connection with God. A Muslim is encouraged to maintain a connection and one easy, yet beneficial way of doing this, is to contemplate and understand His Beautiful Names. Through these names, we are able to know our Creator and learn how to praise and worship Him. We also gain an insight into how and why God's wisdom and justice is sometimes beyond our understanding.

The names Al-Hakeem (The Wise) and Al-Hakam (The Judge) indicate God is the source of all wisdom, in His creation and in His commands, and He is the Judge of all things. He is the One Who created everything, and therefore He alone knows the true wisdom of everything. He judges with fairness and does not oppress anyone the slightest. God is just in all His decisions. This may be evident when one embraces Islam or it might be a slow realisation.

God's unending justice and wisdom may not always be clear; it takes time and effort to truly understand the details. Asking petulant questions can lead to confusion. Once one has established the truthfulness of Islam the next step is to accept the entire message, embrace the religion and learn to pray. It is no coincidence that the first pillar of Islam is to believe, with no reservations that God is One and that Mohammad is His messenger and that the second pillar is to pray. Prayer establishes the connection and opens wide the path to lifelong learning and knowledge. Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, spoke to his companions about both the importance of learning about Islam in a sensible order, and the importance of gaining knowledge.

...so let the first thing to which you will invite them be the Oneness of God. If they learn that, tell them that God has

enjoined on them, five prayers to be offered in one day and one night.[12]

Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, God will make a path to Paradise easy for him.[13]

Asking questions about minor details and expecting to understand everything before conversion is a pointless exercise. One must assess the primary sources of Islam, both the Quran and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad, ask logical questions, and obtain logical answers to establish truthfulness. If s person is satisfied that Islam is the true religion of humankind he or she should embrace the faith without delay and begin to learn its practices and details.

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12 Saheeh Al-Bukhari

13 Ibid.